

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Conflict and Consensus in Catholic Women's Education: A History of Saint Mary's College, 1844-1900

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This study offers an institutional history of Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame Indiana as a means of examining the role of higher education for Catholic women in nineteenth-century Indiana history. It provides in-depth descriptions of the founding of the college, the internal battle for control over the college's mission and resources relative to the University of Notre Dame, the efforts by the Sisters of Holy Cross to create a rigorous academic curriculum, the relationship between Catholic educators and their non-Catholic neighbors, and the ways in which religion shaped the education of women in a religiously affiliated college. Drawing on primary sources from Saint Mary's archives as well as a host of secondary studies, this study also explores the similarities in emerging opportunities for higher education for Catholic and Protestant women in the mid and late nineteenth century.